

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Handbook Purpose

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide information on the processes and responsibilities through which wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire qualifications and training are established and managed by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Training Officers. A Training Officer will refer to anyone responsible for issues regarding qualifications and training.

Handbook Goals, Objective, and Guiding Principles

Goal

This Handbook provides BLM employees, and others responsible for training, a source document that supports employee development and promotes the safety of firefighters and the public.

Objective

The objective of this Handbook is to cover processes and responsibilities through which wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire qualifications and training are established and managed.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are fundamental to the success of the Bureau's Wildland and Prescribed Fire Training Programs:

- Training is a basic responsibility of management at every level of operation intended to promote organizational and individual effectiveness.
- Managers and supervisors are responsible for assessing the training needs and establishing priorities of the organization and individual employees through Individual Development Plans (IDPs).
- Employee development is a practical means for building and maintaining a cadre of employees skilled in the performance of their official duties.
- Training and employee development will be used to meet the career needs and job requirements of all BLM personnel.
- Employees assigned to training are required to attend and complete the training assignment as they are any official assignment; employees are held accountable for failure to complete training assignments.
- Most training will be tracked through the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS).

Bureau Priorities

1. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.
2. Develop qualified personnel and ensure that only trained and qualified personnel participate in fire management activities.
3. Maintain and improve employee performance.
4. Develop employee skills unavailable through existing recruitment sources.
5. Establish and maintain an accountable annual training program.

Responsibilities

Director of the Bureau of Land Management

The Director of the Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the overall direction and effective operation of the training program in the BLM. In addition to this, the Director has additional responsibilities pertaining specifically to the administration and management of fire training and qualifications systems.

The Bureau's Executive Leadership Team (ELT), with the Field Committee, share responsibility with the Director and are responsible for the development and conduct of effective training programs in their respective areas of jurisdiction. The implementation and operation of the program largely rests with these key management officials. Members of the two groups are responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining an accountable annual training system.
- Supporting and funding training at an appropriate level.
- Identifying annual training needs.
- Developing and evaluating training programs.
- Providing training to meet employee needs in conformance with BLM policy and mission.

Human Resources Management Assistant Director

The Human Resources Management Assistant Director is responsible to the Director for the following:

- Establishing BLM policy and procedures for training.
- Evaluation of State and Center training office programs based on the Standards of Adequacy found in the BLM Manual 1400-410 developed by the Department (370 DM 275).
- Advising the Director, members of the ELT, the Field Committee on training and related human resource development issues.
- Providing training office services to the Washington Office employees.

- Compiling and maintaining the annual training report, preparing and responding to training inquiries from the Department, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and other entities.
- Acting as Washington Office liaison and representative to outside agencies and organizations.

Office of Fire and Aviation Director

The Office of Fire and Aviation Director (OF&A Director) is responsible for advising the Director on aspects of training related to the Fire Management Program, establishing priorities for and coordinating with the Bureau's training programs.

The OF&A Director is also responsible for:

- Planning, developing, conducting and evaluating approved training programs under his/her jurisdiction. The Fire Center training programs are to be based on the priorities, resources and funding approved by the Director.
- Providing professional advice and technical expertise to various offices throughout the BLM. NIFC also has interagency responsibilities according to its mandate.
- Providing liaison and coordination with various training, program coordinators and offices throughout the BLM.
- Assuring the validity and appropriateness of course materials and instructional methodology.
- Assuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and internal program standards.
- Representing the BLM on the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).
- Establishing BLM policy for fire training and qualifications.
- Establishing and funding fire training and qualifications programs.
- Notifying the Director of approved changes affecting fire qualifications made by the NWCG and their working teams.
- Coordinating development and implementation of the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) with other federal and state agencies to achieve an effective bureau/interagency program.
- Maintaining the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) and publishing any changes in qualifications as they occur.

National BLM Training Unit Leader (NIFC)

The National BLM Training Unit Leader (NIFC) is responsible for:

- Providing technical advice to the Bureau in the areas of educational and training systems design, fire and aviation management curriculum and course development, training implementation and evaluation, and qualifications standards.

- Participating on national and interagency steering groups, committees, or task forces dealing with fire and aviation management issues affecting training, qualifications standards, publication and distribution of materials, and related areas.
- Reviewing and/or preparing manuals, handbooks, and instruction memoranda that deal with fire and aviation management training and qualifications programs. Assuring that technically correct guidance and instructions are coordinated and consistent with similar instructions issued by other agencies.
- Providing leadership on technical groups to determine new areas of fire and aviation management training needs and developing strategies for course development or modification.
- Developing and implementing training programs in fire and aviation management activities for the Bureau.
- Ensuring that new and redesigned training programs and materials reflect policies, objectives, and regulations of the Bureau.
- Providing oversight for the Bureau on various interagency training programs; e.g., Technical Fire Management (TFM), National Interagency Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program (WFPA), etc.
- Ensuring that the Bureau and other appropriate standards are met and new technology considered in curriculum during course design, development and implementation.
- Monitoring and analyzing fire training programs used by Bureau personnel to ensure cost effective delivery and achievement of learning objectives.

State Directors

State Directors are responsible for:

- Identifying and reporting State fire training and qualifications needs to NIFC.
- Maintaining fire qualifications records and certifying personnel to serve in wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire activities.
- Conducting State level fire training courses and programs.
- Coordinating State fire training and qualifications programs and activities with NIFC, geographic boards, and cooperating agencies.
- Ensuring that state-wide Bureau employees who have received fire training and are qualified in wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire positions are available for fire assignments.
- Providing support to training (local, state, geographic and national) by providing instructors, coordinators, and subject matter experts for course development/revision.

State Fire and Center (NIFC) Training Officers

State Fire and Center (NIFC) Training Officers are responsible for the general management and coordination of training efforts for employees in their respective areas of jurisdiction, which includes the following:

- Identifying annual training needs.
- Developing annual training plans based upon annual training needs assessments or performance appraisal reviews, audits, or evaluations.
- Meeting regulatory training and reporting requirements and directives.
- Assisting local offices and program in delivering and coordinating on-site and on-the-job training.
- Planning, scheduling and delivering training within the areas of jurisdiction.
- Providing prompt and accurate recording and reporting of all training for the annual training report and other necessary reports.
- Ensuring prompt processing of training forms.
- Maintaining close working relationships with the Human Resources Management, BLM training centers, senior management, and appropriate programs and offices.
- Performing duties delegated by the State Director.

State Fire Training Officers

State Fire Training Officers are responsible for:

- Assisting the Fire Management Officer and Line Officer in maintaining the Fire Training and Qualifications Program that meets the regulatory, reporting, and directive requirements.
- Developing annual training plans based upon annual training needs assessments or performance appraisal reviews, audits, or evaluations.
- Serving as the State Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) account manager and coordinator.
- Providing prompt and accurate recording and reporting of all training for the annual training report and other necessary reports.
- Developing a working relationship with Human Resources on the implementation and coordination of the Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) standards.
- Serving as a focal point for program coordination of interagency training programs; e.g., Technical Fire Management (TFM), National Interagency Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program (WFPA).
- Providing input and suggestions to the National BLM Training Committee as a State Representative.
- Serving on the Geographic Area Training Committee as well as the Zone Training Committee.
- Identifying the selection of Subject Matter Experts and Field Reviewers for Bureau and NWCG course development projects.

- Overseeing and coordinating state-wide prioritization of NWCG nominations for training courses.
- Assisting local offices and programs in delivering and coordinating on-site and on-the-job training.
- Reviewing, developing, and implementing policy and guidelines related to training, qualifications, and certification processes.
- Maintaining close working relationships with the Office of Employee Development, BLM training centers, senior management, and appropriate programs and offices.
- Informing and educating employees of training and detail opportunities.
- Overseeing the individual development planning process and incorporating it into workforce planning and training needs activities at a state level.
- Establishing and monitoring formalized mentoring programs.
- Establishing and maintaining a strong link with the State Board of Education, Department of Education, State Office Human Resources staff, universities, colleges, high schools, and minority organizations.
- Coordinating training related topics with the State Operations Lead, State Aviation Lead, the State fuels Lead and the State Community Protection and Assistance Lead.

District Managers

District Managers are responsible for:

- Identifying and reporting District Office fire training and qualifications needs to State Directors.
- Conducting District Office level fire training courses and programs.
- Maintaining fire qualifications records and certifying personnel to serve in wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire positions.
- Coordinating District Office fire training and qualifications programs and activities with State Offices and cooperating agencies.
- Ensuring that District Office personnel who receive qualifications and training in wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire positions are available for fire assignment.
- Ensuring adequate funding is allocated to employee development in order to meet human resource development goals, office work accomplishments, and to enhance employee performance.
- Providing support to training (local, state, geographic, and national) by providing instructors, coordinators, and subject matter experts for course development/revision.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors will assume responsibility for:

- Reviewing the Bureau's human resource development goals, office work accomplishments, and employee performance to identify employee development and training needs using the Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP), Annual Work Plans, and the annual training plan.
- Approving and providing training and developmental activities for employees under their supervision and providing opportunities for employees to get out as trainees.
- Providing trainees on-the-job opportunities to reinforce new skills and knowledge obtained during training sessions.
- Validating training to ensure that identified needs are met.
- Assisting the District Manager in workforce planning efforts by providing workload and skill set needs analysis.
- Assisting the State and Unit Training Officers with course schedules by providing information on skill set needs to operate the organization effectively.
- Providing support to training (local, state, geographic, and national) by providing instructors, coordinators, and subject matter experts for course development/revision.
- Perform duties delegated by the District Manager.

Zone Training Committee Representative

Zone Training Committee Representatives are responsible for:

- Coordinating 200-level courses (refer to page 8 and 9 of the Field Manager's Course Guide, <http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/training/training.htm>).
- Supporting training needs of local State and Area teams.
- Cooperating with GACC sponsor/host 300-level courses.
- Evaluating 100- and 200-level courses.
- Assuring instructors are qualified for 200-level courses.
- Maintaining course instructor catalog.
- Developing training schedule for 100- and 200-level courses.
- Coordinating training analysis for area.
- Managing slot allocation, nomination and pre-work for area level courses.

Unit Level Training Officers

Unit Level Training Officers are responsible for:

- Assisting the Fire Management Officer and State Training Officer by maintaining Fire Training and Qualifications Programs.

- Assisting all employees by providing a consistent and equitable fire training program to effectively meet local, area, and national training and qualifications needs.
- Processing, coordinating, and assisting in the prioritization of unit nominations for all courses.
- Assisting Fire Management Officers in workforce planning efforts by providing fire training needs assessment information.
- Coordinating local training to meet Bureau needs.
- Informing, educating, and facilitating the training opportunities of all employees.
- Maintaining the IQCS database at the local level including inputting training and experience information and production of Incident Qualifications and Certification Cards (Red Cards).
- Coordinating the fire qualifications review process for the unit Qualifications and Certification Committee.
- Ensuring that employees are meeting qualifications required by the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1), Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book) and other Bureau documents.
- Providing expertise and advice on Bureau and interagency fire training issues; e.g., requirements, qualifications, certification, course design.
- Issuing Position Task Books as requested by certifying official in accordance with Bureau and local policy.
- Maintaining training materials and supplies inventories for various classes.
- Distributing training updates to employees as received from national, regional and local training representatives.
- Advising employees and supervisors about individual training plans designed to meet position requirements and overseeing the unit individual development planning process.
- Managing other training programs (e.g., TFM, WFAP, UNLV) for the unit and assisting the State Training Officer on setting priorities.
- Planning, scheduling, and documenting annual Bureau mandatory training courses.
- Developing, implementing, and maintaining fire recruitment plans and materials and participating in recruitment events.
- Drafting and disseminating annual training accomplishment reports.
- Assists the State Training Officer with the implementation of IFPM.

Employees

All Employees have a responsibility for their own self development. Responsibilities may include:

- Identifying training needs with their supervisor at the time of the Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP).
- Implementing skills learned during training sessions.

- Participating in and competing for developmental activities offered by the Bureau and the Department.
- Ensuring that training and records are accurately entered into IQCS.
- Researching training development responsibilities.

Training Committees and Relationships

This section gives a brief overview of the major training committees that BLM Training Officers may be a member of or provide feedback to.

National Wildfire Coordinating Group Incident Operations Standards Working Team (IOSWT)

This team will review, evaluate and make recommendations to the NWCG for issues of the National Wildfire Qualifications and Certifications Systems and their associated components and of the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS).

The team will develop a plan of action to be approved by NWCG for all aspects of Incident Command System and Qualification and Certification subsystem of NIIMS to include, but not limited to, the following:

- Monitor use (or development) of Incident Command System outside the wildland fire community
- Qualification and Certification System
- Operational System Description
- Fireline Handbook
- Position descriptions
- Job performance requirements
- Forms and Forms Manual

The NWCG Incident Operations Standards Working Team Charter can be found at <http://www.nwcg.gov/charters/icswt.htm>.

National Wildfire Coordinating Group Training Working Team (TWT)

The purpose of this team is to develop and coordinate fire management training programs for Federal and State agencies. The team is to function as a working group, defining the functional details and appointing appropriate sub-teams for specific problems and special tasks.

The NWCG Training Working Team Charter can be found at <http://www.nwcg.gov/charters/twt.htm>.

Geographic Area Training Representatives (GATRs)

This group is responsible for organizing, coordinating, and managing geographic area or national training programs in the various geographic areas. Information and recommendations associated with training implementation and evaluation will be passed on to the Training Working Team (TWT) that represents the National Wildland Coordinating Group (NWCG). The group also helps to set regional/geographic area nomination priorities and course content for interagency training.

A list of the primary GATRs can be found at <http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/geomap.htm#Primary%20Geographic%20Area%20Training%20Contacts>

See [Attachment A, page 13](#), at the end of Chapter 1 for the Geographic Area Training Representatives' Charter.

Geographic Area Training Committees

These committees try to maximize the benefits to all the geographic member agencies within their geographic boundaries by coordinating efforts which will facilitate the development, presentation and evaluation of interagency training.

- Provide direction, resources, and monitoring for the implementation of the training standards and components of the NWCG Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification Guide, PMS 310-1 and related training documents.
- Establish and maintain a system of procedures and processes to identify and meet the national and geographic area training needs of the member agencies in a coordinated, efficient, and effective interagency approach.
- Ensure instructors meet NWCG Standards.
- Identify and address issues, concerns, and opportunities related to interagency fire management training.
- Provide advocacy of new techniques, practices, and procedures, which facilitate more effective training.
- Develop and implement a procedure to review, evaluate, and revise NWCG training courses and act as a liaison with NWCG Training Working Team.

- Support interagency area training committees to coordinate and facilitate training objectives and activities at the area level.
- Develop Memorandums of Understanding, monitor courses, and instructor qualifications for non-agency personnel.
- Oversee university programs within their jurisdiction.
- Assist in the implementation of IFPM within the geographic area.

BLM Wildland Fire Training Committee

This committee will review and evaluate training, qualifications, and education programs in which BLM personnel participate and make recommendations for changes as necessary. In concert with the BLM National Operations Committee (NOC), the BLM Wildland Fire Training Committee will also develop and evaluate proposals for new training and education programs and courses that may meet the needs of the BLM fire community into the future.

The Committee has the following distinct purposes:

- Promote information exchange on training and qualifications issues among all levels of the wildland fire organization within BLM
- Focus on training needs analysis and prioritization of training development and delivery workloads
- Conduct “futuring” for the training program, including the development of strategic plans for training on an agency-specific and interagency basis
- Create a mechanism for elevating training and qualifications issues that require action (such as the interpretation of policy, the need for new policy or policy modifications) from the field office level to the national level
- Create a forum for sharing “best practices” in training among BLM offices, to avoid duplication of effort, promote effectiveness and save money
- Make recommendations to various NWCG working teams on training- and qualifications-related issues as appropriate.
- Review all BLM proposals for changes to fire training policy

Members of this committee represent all western BLM states involved in wildland fire management; also includes a line officer representative and a representative from BLM’s National Training Center.

The BLM Wildland Fire Training Committee Charter can be found at <http://www.fire.blm.gov/training/blmtrng/PDFs/Committee/ldrchtr.pdf>.

Local Unit Training Committees

These committees try to maximize the benefits to all the geographic member agencies within their geographic boundaries by coordinating efforts which will facilitate the development, presentation and evaluation of interagency training.

- Provide direction, resources, and monitoring for the implementation of the training standards and components of the NWCG Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification Guide, PMS 310-1 and related training documents.
- Establish and maintain a system of procedures and processes to identify and meet the local training needs of the member agencies in a coordinated, efficient, and effective interagency approach.
- Ensure instructors meet NWCG Standards.
- Identify and address issues, concerns, and opportunities related to interagency fire management training and provide feedback to the Geographic Area Training Committee.
- Provide advocacy of new techniques, practices, and procedures, which facilitate more effective training.
- Implement a procedure to review, evaluate, and revise NWCG training courses.
- Support interagency area training committees to coordinate and facilitate training objectives and activities at the geographic area level.
- Develop Memorandums of Understanding, monitor courses, and instructor qualifications for non-agency personnel for local area training partnerships.
- Assist in the implementation of IFPM within the local area.
- Coordinate training related topics with the local area operations, aviation, fuels management, community protection and assistance leads.

ATTACHMENT A

GEOGRAPHIC AREA TRAINING REPRESENTATIVES FINAL CHARTER November 16, 2000

I. Name

The group will be named the Geographic Area Training Representatives hereinafter known as the Representatives.

II. Authority

The group of Representatives has been established pursuant to the charter authority granted by individual Geographic Area Coordinating Groups or the primary agencies that assign training responsibility.

In general, each Representative will respond to a board of directors within the respective Geographic Area. This may be in the form of a Geographic Area Training Working Team, Steering Committee, or in another configuration. However, for the purpose of Geographic Area coordination, information and recommendations associated with training implementation and evaluation will be passed on to the Training Working Team (TWT) that represents the National Wildland Coordinating Group (NWCG).

III. Purpose

The purpose of the Representatives is to assist in the implementation, coordination and evaluation of fire management training programs for Federal and State agencies. Individual representatives may function as part of a working group and be assigned specific tasks as determined by the consensus of the Representatives.

IV. Membership

The GATR will be composed of one representative (elected by the Geographic Area Working Team, Steering Committee, or other approving authority for a Geographic Area training group) from each Geographic Area. They will be knowledgeable in fire management training delivery and will represent an interagency group from their Geographic Area. The core members will serve as the voting members of the GATR and will be reviewed annually. Additional Agency, state and local members can be included as appropriate through the consensus of the representatives and approval of the Chairperson.

The membership will also include specialized members to assist in an advisory capacity. Recommended members will include a BLM National Fire and Aviation Training Specialist, Office of Aircraft Services training representative, and the USFS Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program Coordinator, Regional Fire Training Officers, and a NARTC representative. Advisory membership will be approved by a vote of the Representatives and will be reviewed annually.

V. Organization

The Representatives serve under direction of their respective Geographic Area Coordinating Groups or primary agencies that assign responsibility for Training. The Representatives will provide a liaison to the NWCG - TWT as needed.

The Representatives will elect one member from the Representatives to serve as Chairperson. The Chairperson will serve for two years beginning at the end of the spring meeting and concluding at the end of the second annual spring meeting (i.e. begin Spring of 2000 and end Spring of 2002). It is through the Chairperson that the NWCG Training Working Team will relate to the Representatives. The Co-chairperson will be elected by the Representatives and will be responsible for all chairperson duties in the absence of the Chairperson.

VI. Authority of the Chairperson

The Chairperson is authorized to convene meetings at such times and places as deemed necessary by the Representatives or in association with NWCG - TWT meetings. It is expected that meetings will be held to the minimum necessary to accomplish the defined purposes of the Representatives.

VII. Meetings

Meetings should be scheduled and agendas provided to members in advance. The Representatives will meet with the NWCG Training Working Team in May of each year.

Cost of the meeting must be borne by the agencies that sponsor membership of the Representatives.

VIII. Responsibility

The Representatives are responsible for developing a plan of action and/or a study plan to efficiently chart their direction and anticipated time frames. Additional responsibilities and procedures are outlined in the Geographic Area Training Representatives Operating Plan.

IX. Reports and Minutes

An accurate summary of the actions taken at each meeting is required. Sufficient records of the Representatives business should be kept to analyze the performance of the Representatives and to keep aware of actions taken. The Chairperson shall insure that information on the Representatives activities, as a Group, is widely distributed. A logistics person is assigned to the group by the chairperson. The logistics person should be knowledgeable in fire management training delivery.

X. TASK FORCES:

Ad-hoc committees may be established as special needs arise. Ad-hoc committees can be re-chartered annually and are subject to Representative review.